

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Audit, Standards & Governance Committee

20th March 2025

MONITORING OFFICER'S REPORT

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor K. May
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton
Report Author Claire Felton	Job Title: Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services Contact email: c.felton@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Wards Affected	N/A
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Council Priority	Sustainable
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Audit, Standards and Governance Committee is asked to RESOLVE that:-

1) subject to Members' comments, the report be noted.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This report sets out the position in relation to key standards regime matters which are of relevance to the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee since the last update provided at the meeting of the Committee in January 2025.
- 2.2 It has been proposed that from 2024-25 a report of this nature be presented to the Committee on a quarterly basis to ensure that Members are kept updated with any relevant standards matters.
- 2.3 Any further updates arising after publication of this report, including any relevant standards issues raised by Parish Councils, will be reported verbally by Officers at the meeting.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising out of this report.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Chapter 7 of Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 ('the Act') places a requirement on authorities to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and co-opted (with voting rights) Members of an authority. The Act also requires the authority to have in place arrangements under which allegations that either a district or parish councillor has breached his or her Code of Conduct can be investigated, together with arrangements under which decisions on such allegations can be made.

5. COUNCIL PRIORITIES - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Council Priorities

- 5.1 It is important to ensure that the Council manages standards regime matters in an appropriate manner. The issues detailed in this report help to ensure that the Council is sustainable.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.2 There are no specific climate change implications.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct implications arising out of this report. Details of the Council's arrangements for managing standards complaints under the Localism Act 2011 are available on the Council's website and from the Monitoring Officer on request.

Operational Implications

Member Complaints

- 6.2 Since the last report the Council received one Member/Member complaint, which was resolved informally and several complaints from members of the public in relation to a District Councillor which is at initial assessment stage.

Constitution Review

- 6.3 The Constitution Review Working Group (CRWG) is responsible for reviewing the content of the Council's constitution. Any proposed changes arising from meetings of the group are reported for the consideration of Council.
- 6.4 The last meeting of CRWG took place on 29th January 2025, at which Members discussed planning site visits, planning call-in processes and a number of matters that had been referred to the CRWG by group leaders for consideration.
- 6.5 A further meeting of the CRWG has been requested by Members, to take place before the end of the municipal year. Any recommendations arising from this meeting will be reported to the Annual council meeting for consideration alongside the annual review of the Scheme of Delegations.

Member Development

- 6.6 The Member Development Steering Group (MDSG) is responsible for co-ordinating Member training, induction and ICT support. The group meets throughout the year.
- 6.7 The latest meeting of the group took place on 20th January 2025. During the meeting, Members discussed training requirement for Councillors in the 2025/26 municipal year. As Members are now mid-way through a 4 year term, the group concluded that it was not necessary to have a lengthy list of training sessions made available during the year. However, some mandatory training has been requested for 2025/26 on the following subjects:

- Code of conduct and standards regime
- Cyber security
- Planning Committee
- Local Government finance

Member Training

- 6.8 A Member training programme was arranged for 2024/25. This programme was organised in accordance with arrangements requested

by the MDSG. In line with the approach agreed by the MDSG, a lot of this training has been delivered jointly with Redditch Borough Council.

- 6.9 The MDSG has previously requested that the majority of training should be delivered in person. However, Members can opt to attend most training sessions remotely, with the link to the session provided on request.
- 6.10 The training sessions that have taken place since the last Monitoring Officer's report or which are shortly due to take place include:
- Member Planning Training – Thursday 9th January 2025
 - Training for Members of the Shareholders Committee – Tuesday 4th February 2025
 - Member Cyber Security Training – Wednesday 5th March 2025
 - Member Training – Carbon Reduction – Thursday 6th March 2025
 - Code of Conduct Training – Thursday 8th May 2025
 - Joint RBC/BDC Member Planning Training – Thursday 15th May 2025
- 6.10 Training continues to be offered by the Local Government Association (LGA) to elected Members. This training is promoted to Members throughout the year.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The main risks associated with the details included in this report are:
- Risk of challenge to Council decisions; and
 - Risk of complaints about elected Members.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

No appendices.

Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.

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9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor K. May, Leader and Cabinet Member Strategic Partnerships and Governance	4/3/25
Lead Director / Head of Service	Claire Felton - Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	
Financial Services	N/A	N/A
Legal Services	Nicola Cummings, Principal Solicitor (Governance)	26/2/25